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Between the Lines

Intelligence Estimates 'Doctored'?

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'Philosophical Convictions' Injected Into Cuban Report

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Washington — A government process which is practically unknown to all citizens is the system used to produce national intelligence "estimates."

"Estimates" do not refer to budgetary matters but are supposed to be fully-rounded appraisal of a situation, recommendations and possibilities.



Miss Roosevelt

These "estimates" occupy a decisive position in formulating new policies or in justifying policies about to be implemented.

Indeed, a special group calling itself the Board of National Estimates exists within the Central Intelligence Agency specifically to compile and write national intelligence estimates. These estimates ultimately are concurred in by the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) which operates within the National Security Council structure.

All other intelligence gathering agencies, including the Defense Intelligence Agency, the service intelligence agencies, and the FBI, have representation on the USIB. The National Intelligence Estimates which evolve in this manner are used by the President, the National Security Council, and the Department of State and the Defense Department as a basis for policy.

Vital to Survival

Understandably, our topmost Government officials are so involved in routine bureaucratic affairs that they rely more and more on these estimates to determine their own attitudes, approval or disapproval of the most crucial issues of national and international life. In fact, these estimates are used for our personal and collective survival and extinction.

By
EDITH KERMIT ROOSEVELT

Yet, often these estimates are drawn up according to preconceived theories or conclusions. Instead of reflecting hard intelligence facts, many of our national intelligence estimates reflect preconceived policies or justification for policies already implemented.

The tip-off that this is in fact the case is seen in the interim report on the Cuban military buildup, put out by the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

In its "summary of major findings," the report stated that: "Faulty evaluation and the predisposition of the intelligence community to the philosophical conviction that it would be incompatible with Soviet policy to introduce strategic missiles into Cuba resulted in intelligence judgments and evaluations which later proved to be erroneous."

'Schedules' Furnished

How do such "philosophical convictions" get injected into the determination of national intelligence estimates?

Estimates are usually based upon requests or "schedules" furnished by the State Department. The word "schedules" in this context does not refer to anything so crude as a railroad or time schedule. It is a capsule description of an assignment.

These "schedules" are actually a few paragraphs containing virtual instructions to the intelligence agencies to determine in advance what they are supposed to find. For example, let us take the following typical State Department schedule setting the direction on the Cuban military buildup.

"The establishment on Cuban soil of Soviet nuclear weapons should be used against the United States would be incompatible with Soviet policy as we presently estimate it. It would indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in U. S.-Soviet relations than the USSR has displayed thus far, and would have important policy implications in other areas."

States would be incompatible with Soviet policy as we presently estimate it. It would indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in U. S.-Soviet relations than the USSR has displayed thus far, and would have important policy implications in other areas.

"However, Soviet military planners have almost certainly considered the contribution which Cuban bases might